

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims have been rewritten without changing their substance in an effort to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 and to provide proper antecedent language for all positively recited features.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the art of record is respectfully traversed.

Applicants readily concede that the patentability of the presently disclosed subject matter over Sandner, cited, resides in feature ©). The advantages obtained by this feature have been described in the last paragraph on page 2 of the specification. Contrary to the Examiner's holding, applicants respectfully submit that Fig. 16 of Miyamoto et al, cited, do **not** make this feature obvious. While the patent discloses circular pressure rings 17, 19, they apply axial pressure at the **hub** region of the blank during the hot-rolling step. This fixes the axial position of the blank but it does **not** clamp the two opposite end faces at the circumference to prevent radial movement thereof during densification, as claimed. In other words, Miyamoto et al do **not** prevent **radial movement at the circumference** of the blank, as is essential according to the

invention in order to improve the known Sandner method by preventing an increase of the diameter of the **powder** metal blank. The processing conditions in hot-rolling differ fundamentally so that Miyamoto et al can provide no teaching for the improvement of the Sandner method.

It is important to note that applicants' pressure rings 8, 9 exert a clamping pressure only at the circumference of the power metal blank and not over the entire diameter of the blank so as to prevent radial movement without applying clamping pressure to the rest of the blank. This is sufficient for the densification of the toothing but prevents an increase in the diameter of the blank.

In view of the above, claim 6 is respectfully submitted clearly to be patentable, as is everyone of the dependent claims since they define preferred features none of which is suggested by the art of record.

A sincere effort having been made to overcome all grounds of rejection, favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 6-11 are respectfully solicited.



Respectfully submitted,
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